

submedian nervure. Along the costa there are two streaks of grey alternating with brown.

The hind wing is darker, with the streaks and patches grey. The hind margin has six brown spots, commencing from the first subcostal nervule to the first median nervule. Above this there is a submarginal border of grey. The yellow band of the upperside is indicated by a lighter brown band, having the outlines of pale yellow, the spot being the same in colour. There is a streak of grey from the base of the wing to the costal margin.

Exp. 1.9 inch.

Hab. Fantee (*G. E. S.*).

XLII.—Notes on the Racquet-tailed Rollers.

By H. E. DRESSER.

HAVING been lately engaged in working out the synonymy of the Rollers, I had occasion to examine all available specimens of the Racquet-tailed Rollers, which are still extremely rare in collections, there being, so far as I can ascertain, but four specimens in Great Britain, viz. two in the British Museum, one in Captain Shelley's collection (now purchased by the British Museum authorities), and one in the collection of Canon Tristram, which he has kindly lent to me for examination. The three former of these have all been labelled by Mr. Sharpe as being referable to *Coracias spatulatus*, Trimen; but on receipt of the specimen from Canon Tristram I at once saw that it was specifically distinct from the other three. In order to work out the question I compared them carefully with their nearest allies, *Coracias abyssinicus* and *C. caudatus*, and may point out that all the Racquet-tailed Rollers differ from these in having the median wing-coverts cinnamon and in having all the tail-feathers conspicuously terminated with black and blue, whereas in *C. abyssinicus* and *C. caudatus* all the rectrices but the central and two lateral ones are pale blue throughout. The two adult birds in the British Museum, one from the Umvuli River, East Africa, and the other from Caconda, in West Africa, have the throat and breast blue, exactly as in *Coracias abyssinicus*; whereas the third, from Pantamenka, East Africa, labelled as young, has the throat and breast somewhat striped with pale blue, buff in general coloration on the sides, but otherwise pale turquoise-blue. The specimen from Canon Tristram, however, from Newala, East Africa, has the sides of the

head, throat, and breast pale brownish buff, broadly striped with white, and without any trace of blue, much as in *Coracias nœvius*, but much paler.

On referring to Trimen's original description of *Coracias spatulatus* (Proc. Zool. Soc. 1880, p. 31), I find that he states: "throat, breast, belly, thighs, and under wing- and tail-coverts pale bright verditer-blue, varied on the lower throat and breast by lilacine cinnamon-brown webs, leaving the shaft-stripes of the blue; cheeks and ear-coverts mixed lilac and verditer-blue; sides of neck coloured like the back; sides of breast dull sandy brownish, with bluish-white shaft-stripes." Thus Trimen's *C. spatulatus* is very different from Canon Tristram's specimen, and also from the two adult birds in the British Museum, but somewhat resembles the third (young) specimen in that collection, which appears to me to be in all probability the young of the true *C. spatulatus*. On referring to Professor Barboza du Bocage's description of *Coracias dispar*, from Caconda (Jorn. Sc. Lisb. xxviii. p. 227, 1880), I find that it agrees exactly with the two birds from Caconda and the Umvuli River, as he describes the underparts as blue ("subtus thalassinus"); and the species with the underparts blue, as in *C. abyssinicus*, will stand therefore as *Coracias dispar*, Bocage. The bird in Canon Tristram's collection is so very distinct from both *Coracias spatulatus* and *Coracias dispar* that I cannot do otherwise than give it a name, and propose to call it *Coracias Weigalli*, and give the description of it as follows:—

Pileo et nucha cum dorso antico sordide olivaceis; fronte, mento et superciliis albis; dorso postico, scapularibus et secundariis intimis dilute cinnamomeis; aliis et cauda sicut in *Coracio dispare* coloratis; capitis lateribus, gula et pectore toto pallide fusco-cervinis, conspicue albo striatis et indistincte vinaceo tinctis; abdomine imo, subcaudalibus et subalaribus pallide turcino-cæruleis; rectricibus extimis valde elongatis et spatulatis.

Long. tot. 13·0, culm. 1·25, alæ 6·3, caudæ 8·3, tarsi 0·78.

It is unfortunate that I have not had an opportunity of examining the type of *Coracias spatulatus*, which is, I believe, in the museum at Cape Town; and the material at hand is so very meagre that it is impossible at present to say much respecting the geographical range of these Racquet-tailed Rollers. Besides the specimens above referred to there are examples in the Lisbon Museum from West Africa which are doubtless all referable to *C. dispar*; there are also several in the Berlin Museum obtained by Boehm at Kakoma, and it will be interesting to ascertain to which form these specimens belong.